BULLETIN ON AGING

No. 3/1990

The present issue of the Bulletin on Aging *includes sections on activities of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as news from different countries on activities relating to aging. The Forum section reproduces the speech that Ambassador Julia Tavares de Alvarez made at the Eighth International Convention of the International Federation of Associations for the Elderly (FIAPA) on dependence and the elderly.*

United Nations activities

Tenth anniversary launched

During the first half of 1990, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/67 of 8 December 1989, the United Nations Office at Vienna/Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (UNOV/CSDHA) invited government mechanisms on aging and national and international organizations, experts, practitioners and the elderly themselves to participate in developing an action programme on aging for 1992 and beyond. The action programme, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session in the autumn of 1990, has two dominant themes: the selection of targets and community-wide activities. Target selection would identify what could be achieved, and how, by the year 200!. Community-wide activities would involve neighbourhoods, the business sector, the media and schools. In addition, numerous suggestions for celebrating 1992, the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Aging,[1] are given.

Should the General Assembly approve it, the action programme will be widely distributed during 1991 and 1992. In addition, a calendar of events will be drawn up to register local, national and global activities supporting the programme.

United Nations system preparations

An inter-agency meeting of bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system concerned with aging will take place at Vienna in February 1991, for which UNOV/CSDHA will act as host. Target selection and tenth-anniversary activities will be discussed in the context of the action programme on aging for 1992 and beyond. The feasibility of developing a United Nations system-wide medium-term plan on aging will be explored.

Second edition of the World Aging Situation

The first edition of the *World Aging Situation: Strategies and Policies* (ST/ESA/150) was published in 1985 by UNOV/CSDHA. The second edition is under preparation and will be published in 1991. Whereas the 1985 edition comprehensively discussed issues related to aging and provided useful background information for policy and programme development, the second edition will discuss options on the basis of case-studies, which could be of immediate assistance to planners.

Global aging and development

UNOV/CSDHA has begun work on the project entitled "Developmental implications of demographic change: global population aging". The project is being funded by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) are co-operating with UNOV/CSDHA on the project.

Contents

	Page
United Nations activities ...	1
Intergovernmental activities	2
Activities of non-governmental organizations ...	2
Country review	3
Calendar of events	6
Publications	6
Forum: *Dependence and the elderly*	7

[1] Adopted by the World Assembly on Aging, held at Vienna from 26 July to 6 August 1982, and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51.

Published by United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. P.O. Box 500 A-1400 Vienna, Austria.

The aim of the project is to identify and assess specific developmental implications of the process of population aging and to suggest policy options in response to this demographic feature. The project focuses on all the important aspects of population development planning.

It is expected that the project will have three major results:

(a) Four regional working papers will be prepared on Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia identifying and assessing the economic and social implications of demographic change as their populations age;

(b) A technical monograph will be prepared, detailing findings of the project and presenting a set of policy options and programme recommendations;

(c) A core group of experts and a network of centres and institutions concerned with aging and development will be established in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia.

Intergovernmental activities

Seminar on Population Aging

A Seminar on Population Aging was held in Tokyo from 17 June to 1 July 1990. Eleven policy-makers and administrators in the field of aging attended the two-week seminar, which had been organized by the Japanese Organization for International Co-operation in Family Planning, Inc (JOICFP) with the support of UNFPA.

The objectives were to increase the awareness and understanding of future policy needs in the field, as well as to establish a network of dialogue and collaboration between experts in the Asian region. Participants attended lectures on issues related to aging in Japan and each participant gave a presentation of such issues in relation to his or her own country. Two field trips gave participants the opportunity of seeing how Japanese policies were being implemented in both rural and urban settings. At the closing session, the Chief of the Asia and the Pacific Division, UNFPA, expressed his hope that participants of the seminar would formulate policies and programmes for the elderly with an eye to the future.

(JOICFP News, No. 194, August 1990, published by JOICFP, 6th floor, Hoken Kaikan Bekkan Building, 1-1 Sadoharacho, Ichigaya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan.)

European Community

Consumers Consultative Council

The newly constituted Consumers Consultative Council (CCC) of the European Community (EC) has specifically recognized the situation of older consumers by including in its membership an expert on aging.

The Three Year Action Plan for Consumer Policy in the European Community (1990-1992) was presented by Commissioner Karel Van Miert at the first meeting of CCC, which was held at Florence on 24 April 1990. On this occasion, Commissioner Van Miert mentioned specifically the importance of disabled and elderly people as consumers.

(Eurolink Age Bulletin, May/June 1990, published by Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

European Commission Communication

The European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee have been formulating their opinions on the European Commission Communication on Ageing. EC had proposed a two-year action programme for elderly people, including studies, information exchange, conferences, seminars and preparatory work with the aim of constituting an information network on innovative projects in member States. It also included proposals that 1993 should be designated "European Year for the Elderly and Solidarity between Generations". Further information on these proposals may be obtained from: Karen Chapman, International Assistant, Eurolink Age, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL, United Kingdom.

Activities of non-governmental organizations

United Kingdom: European code of practice on age and disability proposed

Age and disability were considered together, across sectoral boundaries, for the first time during the Eurolink Age Policy Encounter on Age and Disability. The main recommendation emanating from the meeting, held in mid-March, was that there should be a European code of practice encompassing the two issues.

(Eurolink Age Bulletin, May/June 1990, published by Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

United States of America: Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

The aim of Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is to bridge the gap between generations throughout the world. In Uganda, for example, RSVP volunteers present educational films and videos to schoolchildren and provide counselling on national policies and traditional values. In Israel, volunteers are helping handicapped children to experience the adventure of horseback riding. In Australia, a Rotary Club has asked RSVP to provide a course for young people on how to handle money. In other parts of Australia, RSVP is trying to create a partnership with the States Civil Rehabilitation Committee whereby volunteers would visit prisons, write letters for inmates and assist persons appearing in court.

RSVP has organized many services throughout the world. There are 10,000 active senior members of the organization outside the United States, and the possibility of establishing volunteer programmes in Eastern Europe is being explored.

(RSVP International Exchange, summer 1990, vol. 2, No. 1, published by RSVP International, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, United States.)

United Kingdom: Third Age Network

Third Age Network, a non-profit organization aimed at helping men and women over the age of 50 to deal with the challenge of the third age, was launched in the United Kingdom on 24 April 1990 by Patrick Nichols, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment. The Network was formed by the Emeritus Register in collaboration with Future Perfect, a specialist third age consultancy firm. In the words of Stephen Mullay, Chairman of Third Age Network: "The Network aims to link individuals with each other, relevant employers and intermediaries through local groups, providing information specific to each person's needs and a database of talented members." Further information may be obtained from: Quadrant Arcade Chambers, Romford RN1 3EH, United Kingdom.

(*Age + Resource*, June 1990, published by the National Council on Ageing, 1268 London Road, London SW16 46J, United Kingdom.)

United Kingdom: Age Concern England

Conference News

Age Concern England established a conference unit in 1989 to build upon their existing programme of holding two conferences a year. The first edition of *Conference News* was recently published to inform readers of forthcoming conferences. Further information may be obtained from Age Concern England, Conference Unit, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL, United Kingdom.

An elderly person of the Marikorawa Tribe in Madras

Photo by John Isaac. Ref. UN 153448

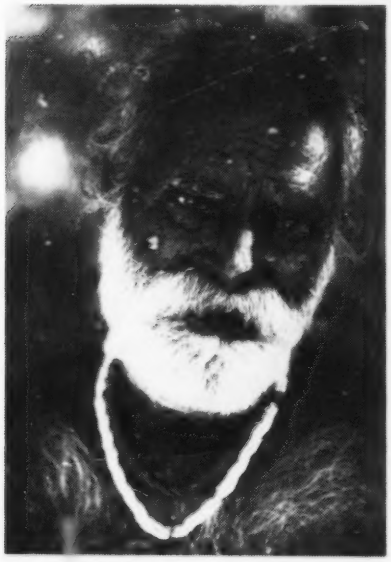


Photo by Tone MARCAN

Coming of Age Campaign

To mark the occasion of its Golden Jubilee, Age Concern England is launching the Coming of Age Campaign, a major review of issues currently affecting the elderly and for the next 50 years. The data collected during the Campaign will be presented at a major conference and used for the preparation of an *Agenda for Action*, which will incorporate a survey of opinions and attitudes in five different action packs, namely: *The Impact of Technology, The Economic Equation, The Lifelong Environment, The Human Factor, and Rights* and *Choices*.

(*Conference News*, June/July 1990, published by Age Concern England, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

Country review

Belgium

Anne Marie Lizin, Under-Secretary of State for Europe 1992, has organized an information campaign in Belgium for all persons over the age of 60 in order to promote a positive attitude towards Europe. The campaign is being promoted on Belgian television, as well as in posters and leaflets distributed to organizations for older people. Ms. Lizin has published a brochure for the elderly in which EC authorities, the economic and social roles of older citizens and the activities of EC are explained. Practical advice and useful addresses are also given in the brochure.

(*EURAG-INFORMATION*, No. 6, 1990, published by the European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly (EURAG), Schmiedgasse 26/1/100, A-8010 Graz, Austria.)

Colombia

The National Encounter on the Third Age was held from 26 to 27 July 1990 at Bogotá. Its objectives were to improve knowledge of the situation of the elderly in Colombia and to formulate criteria on how to tackle related issues. Further information may be obtained from: Instituto de Desarrollo Educativo Latino Americano, Programa de Gerontología, Ministerio de Justicia, Calle 26 No. 77-47, Bogotá.

Czechoslovakia

Primary geriatric care is regarded as essential in Czechoslovakia and a number of types of care (at home and in institutions) are being considered. Recently, the ministries of health and social affairs were separated to allow for the introduction of new principles of care for the elderly. Changes in the structure of health care will allow private, religious and charitable institutions to take part.

Future activities include establishing contacts with governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote the exchange of information. The

READEX

Czechoslovak Medical Society and the Gerontological Society are also undergoing changes. A Club of Pensioners has been established.

(EURAG-INFORMATION, No. 7, 1990, published by EURAG, Schmiedgasse 26/1/100, A-8010 Graz, Austria.)

Denmark

The DaneAge Foundation, a Danish organization established in 1910, is in the process of developing its own agency for sending active elderly people to developing countries as volunteers. In February 1990, the Foundation distributed a brochure to all households in Northern Zealand (comprising 150,000 homes) describing the activities of the Foundation, as well as the training programme. The brochure challenged active retired elderly persons to work as volunteers in developing countries. The response to the challenge was overwhelming. Since February, the Foundation has been attempting to raise the funds to finance the agency, as well as to make the first tentative approach to other agencies in order to link up the elderly people with projects in developing countries. Further information may be obtained from: George W. Leeson, Research and Development, DaneAge Foundation, Vesterbrogade 97, 1620 Copenhagen V.

(Eurolink Age Bulletin, July 1990, published by Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

France

Alzheimer France, the French national association for Alzheimer's disease, is giving five awards in 1990 to scientists carrying out research on Alzheimer's disease. Grants will be available to scientists just starting out in the field, as well as to more experienced researchers. Further information may be obtained from: Laurence d'Aramon, Alzheimer's Disease Society of France, 49 rue Mirabeau, 75016 Paris.

(Eurolink Age Bulletin, July 1990, published by Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

Germany

In order to compensate for the insufficient number of nurses and providers of care employed in homes for the aged, the Caritasverband of Stuttgart has launched an initiative entitled "Help by the young elderly". Young elderly, often persons who have taken early retirement, can devote some of their time to putting their skills at the disposal of older people who are in a less fortunate position.

The initial group consists of persons between the ages of 50 and 70. They work for 16 hours a week, at times they choose individually, and receive a small expense allowance.

(EURAG-INFORMATION, No. 7, 1990, published by EURAG, Schmiedgasse 26/1/100, A-8010 Graz, Austria.)

India

Twenty-eight senior care staff members from 25 social-service organizations participated in a seven-day residence training programme held at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in February 1990. Organized by HelpAge India, the programme was aimed at senior care staff members who manage old-age homes. Its objective was to improve the standard of care in such homes, as well as to make them an integral part of their communities.

Participants were offered training in understanding the needs and problems of the elderly and in managing homes successfully. Guest faculty members were invited to speak and a special lecture-cum-demonstration was arranged at the local college of nursing. Participants received information on care for the sick and the bedridden, accident and fracture management, and the nutritional and psychological needs of patients. Participants also visited two homes for the aged.

(HelpAge India News, May 1990, vol. V, No. 2, published by Narendra Trehan on behalf of HelpAge India, 1 Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110 001.)

Ireland

The Labour Party has introduced a new Equal Status Bill which, when enacted, would prohibit discrimination at the work place on the grounds of age (as well as on grounds of sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion, handicap, race, colour, nationality or national ethnic origin). Discrimination would be unlawful not only at the work place, but also in education, in the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal of premises.

(Age and Opportunity, summer 1990, published by Age and Opportunity, 68-71 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1.)

Luxembourg

The city of Luxembourg has grouped all bodies engaged in services for the elderly under one telephone number: 45 75 75. Someone will be available at this number 24 hours a day so that home services, such as meals-on-wheels and SOS Senior (an association that provides information and assumes the task of contacting authorities etc.) can be reached at all times.

(EURAG-INFORMATION, No. 7, 1990, published by EURAG, Schmiedgasse 26/1/100, A-8010 Graz, Austria.)

Netherlands

The Netherlands Programme for Research on Aging (NESTOR) was set up in 1988 by the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs. The aim of NESTOR is to strengthen the position of gerontological research in the Netherlands. NESTOR supports a multidisciplinary research programme for 1989-1995, geared towards finding effective ways of promoting positive and independent functioning in elderly people to minimize the negative aspects of deficiencies and to improve quality of life. In particular, NESTOR seeks to collaborate and co-ordinate research at an international level. Further information may be obtained from: NESTOR, P.O. Box 1287, BG Nijmegen, NL-6501, Netherlands.

(Eurolink Age Bulletin, July 1990, published by Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.)

GILDE, an organization that was founded in 1984 in response to the growing numbers of skilled older people who become socially isolated after retirement, brings together men and women who wish to pass on their knowledge to younger people on a voluntary basis. The organization also attempts to place older members in regular jobs in non-profit organizations. Recently, a new project was launched entitled "Mee in Mokum" (Come along to Amsterdam) in which older people offer small groups of visitors guided tours of Amsterdam, telling the story of their own life in the city. The example of GILDE is being followed in many other places in the Netherlands, as well as in Belgium,

Germany and the United Kingdom. Further information may be obtained from: GILDE, Hartenstraat 18, 1016 CB Amsterdam, Netherlands.

(*Age + Resource*, June 1990, published by the National Council on Ageing, 1268 London Road, London SW16 46J, United Kingdom.)

Singapore

In Singapore, an elderly person is defined as someone who is 60 years of age or older. Currently, the elderly constitute 8 per cent of the population and are expected to constitute 26 per cent by 2030. It has been estimated that it will only take 21 years for the elderly in Singapore to make up 20 per cent of the population instead of 10 per cent.

The aging of the population is a result of the aging of the babies born after the Second World War, the below-replacement fertility levels since 1975 and the increase in life expectancy. Life expectancy at birth is now 74 years: 71 years for males and 76 for females. Greater numbers of females at the extreme old ages has had an effect on the types of care needed by the elderly. Elderly females in Singapore are often widowed, and are therefore left with no financial resources since they had no paid employment during their lifetime.

Statistics show that only 1.7 per cent of Singapore's elderly live in homes for the aged or in nursing homes. Studies of the aged "sick" (defined as persons over 60 years who have prolonged illness of a lifelong nature and who have some physical or mental disability) indicate that 7 per cent stay in institutions and 93 per cent live in the community.

Reading a magazine in the Soviet Union

Visit to UNOV/CSDHA of Mr. E. Tack, Head of the Division for Aging Policy in the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Women and Health, Germany. Photo by E. Schwang, UNIS

Although the elderly themselves consider that homes for the aged should be provided, most would prefer not to live in such homes. The policy of the Government, therefore, is to maintain the elderly in the community for as long as possible. The Government is strengthening community-based services and is aware of the need to provide institutional care for the frail aged who cannot be taken care of in their own homes.

(*JOICFP News*, No. 193, July 1990, published by JOICFP, 6th Floor, Hoken Kaikan Bekkan Building, 1-1 Sadohara-cho, Ichigaya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan.)

Spain

Currently, 39 per cent of elderly Spaniards travel on holiday, 92.4 of them choosing destinations within Spain. By contrast, in 1981, only 7 per cent of the elderly travelled. The availability of medical services at the holiday destination is seen by 88.8 per cent of the elderly as the most important factor in their choice of destination. Women tend to travel more than men.

(*Boletín Informativo*, Consejo Español de Mayores, Gran Via, 67 5° piso, oficina 515, 28013 Madrid.)

Thailand

In 1960 the population over 60 years of age in Thailand numbered 1.2 million; in 1980 it numbered 2.5 million; currently it numbers 3.2 million; and by the year 2000 it will number 4.8 million, thus increasing from about 5 per cent of the population in 1980 to 7 per cent in 2000.

The first home for the elderly was established in 1953 and there are currently 12 such homes, which can only take care of 1,600-1,800 elderly persons. The Government therefore encourages the private sector to provide social welfare services for the elderly.

The national economic and social development plans stress that the family, as a basic social unit, should be strengthened and should care for its elderly members more adequately. Since not every family or community can be expected to be able to take care of its aging members, the Government has tried to provide another system of non-institutional care, elderly social service centres, all over the country. These centres provide services and carry out activities on behalf of the elderly in neighbouring communities, and mobile units serve the elderly at home.

(*Integration*, July 1990, published by JOICFP, 6th Floor, Hoken Kaikan Bekkan Building, 1-1 Sadohara-cho, Ichigaya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162, Japan.)

United States of America

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA), a non-profit organization, celebrates its fortieth anniversary in 1990. As the Census Bureau predicts an ever growing older population, NCOA continues to co-ordinate various public and private ventures. By increasing its

international efforts and launching educational campaigns concerning the elderly, NCOA hopes to improve attitudes towards the world's aging population. (*Perspectives on Aging*, May/June 1990, published by NCOA, 600 Maryland Avenue S.W., West Wing 100, Washington, D.C. 20024.)

Calendar of events

Economic Equation is the title of a conference to be held in the United Kingdom on 5 March 1991, which will focus on the overall impact of an aging population on the British economy and its implications for future relationships between generations. Further information may be obtained from: Age Concern England, Conference Unit, 60 Pitcairn Rd., Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL, United Kingdom.

The older generation in Europe, their political, economic and sociocultural potential, will be discussed at the *XIII International Congress of EURAG* to be held at Davos, Switzerland, from 11-14 June 1991. Further information may be obtained from: EURAG, Schmiedgasse 26/1/100, A-8010 Graz, Austria.

II European Congress of Gerontology will be held at Madrid from 11 to 14 September 1991. The Congress will cover a variety of interdisciplinary topics in the hope of establishing new directions for gerontological care and research. Further information may be obtained from: Grupo Geyseco, Capitán Haya 60, 2º piso, 28020 Madrid, Spain.

Fourth International Conference on Advances in Preventive Geriatrics will be held at Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, from 18 to 20 September 1991. Further information may be obtained from: Slovak Medical Society, S. Kozáková, Mickiewiczova 18, 81322 Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

The Asia/Oceania region of the International Association of Gerontology will hold a congress at Yokohama, Japan, from 31 October to 3 November 1991. Further information may be obtained from: Congress Secretariat of the Fourth Asia/Oceania Regional Congress of Gerontology, c/o Japan Gerontological Society, Kyorin Building No. 702, 4-2-1 Yshima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113, Japan.

The Sixth International Conference on Mobility and Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons, COMOTRED 92, will take place at Lyons, France, from 31 May to 3 June 1992. It is being held in English and French by the National Institute for Transport and Safety Research (INRETS), France, in co-operation with the Jean Moniet University of Saint Etienne and the Claude Bernard University of Lyons, under the general auspices of the Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council of the United States. Further information may be obtained from: Sixth COMOTRED Secretariat, INRETS, Nicole Teillac, 109 Avenue Salvador Allende, Case 24, 69675 Bron Cedex, France.

Publications

Die Hochbetagten — eine Herausforderung an die Sozialpolitik der 90er Jahre in Europa (The very old, a challenge for social policies in the 90s in Europe), vol. V of *Schriftenreihe*, a series published by the Hamburger Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Fortbildung in der Altenhilfe (HAFA), Wartenau 11, D-2000 Hamburg 76, Germany.

This German publication documents the first European congress of managers of old people's homes, which took place at Berlin from 13 to 15 September 1989. Further information may be obtained from HAFA.

A 114-year old man on Shima Island in Japan Photo by Bruno J. Zehnder, Ref. UN 148561

Social Developments Affecting Elderly People in the EC Member States (1989)

This report on social developments affecting the elderly in EC member States during 1989 has been prepared on the basis of information supplied by Eurolink Age correspondents in those States. It contains information on new legislative actions, new policies or proposals for action at the national level, pension incomes and other benefits. Further information may be obtained from: Eurolink Age, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.

Age + Resource

A quarterly periodical entitled *Age + Resource*, published by Age Resource, seeks to provide information about the activities of different organizations in the field of aging. Age Resource fosters the potential capacity of many older people, those aged 50 years and more, to be actively involved and to find personal satisfaction in a variety of economically and socially viable activities. Further information may be obtained from the Manager, Age Resource, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4EJ, United Kingdom.

(Continued on page 8)

Forum • Forum • Forum

Dependence and the elderly*

George Burns, the American comedian now in his 90s, once observed: "People practise getting old. The minute they get to be 65 or 70, they sit down slow, they get into a car with trouble. They start taking small steps."

Of course, some people in their 60s and 70s—and many in their 80s—do have to make substantial accommodations to age-based disabilities. Yet often the inflexibility is more in the mind than in the joints. We feel we must conform to social expectations about aging, regardless of how we feel. It somehow seems "natural".

So it is with the idea of aging and dependence. What do many people automatically associate with growing old? Illness, weakness, poverty, isolation, desolation and depression. In other words, passivity, vulnerability, helplessness and a circumscribed role in life. Simply because people have lived for a certain number of years.

This attitude often carries over into our efforts to deal with the "problem" of aging. The mere fact that we refer to the problem of aging is proof of this. When we consider the needs of older people, we automatically think about how we can help them. After all, they depend on us—they are dependent.

Let us think for a moment. Aging is related to dependence, but not just in the way we often hear about it in this connection. We need older people just as much as they need us, and we ought to be able to depend upon them more than we do. The dependence, in other words, is mutual.

We need to remind ourselves that the elderly are a national resource of great importance. They are the repository of a lifetime of vigour, accumulated knowledge, skills and experience that we could and should tap. To echo President John F. Kennedy—let us focus on what older people can do for their country and themselves, not just on what their country can do for them.

Yes, in most countries there is a need to increase the income of older people. But why not be socially creative and make a virtue of economic necessity? We could look at older people as part of the solution, rather than as just another problem. Let us think of what we can do to make it possible for many elderly to become masters of their own economic fate, even agents of social change, rather than passive recipients of assistance.

To become economically productive, old people don't need charity. They don't need to be towed along the road to self-sufficiency. All many of them need is a jump start to enable them to move under their own power.

Is this merely wishful thinking? Not at all. Self-help and income-generating initiatives for the elderly are realistic and do-able. Out of overwhelming economic necessity, older people in developing nations have already been launched in businesses as diverse as home and automobile repair services, general mechandise shops, equipment rentals, and child care. Modern technology, far from being a barrier to the employment of older workers, has often made it easier for them to work. Word processing and telemarketing services have proved to be very appropriate for older citizens.

What about money? Even the smallest business must have seed capital. Again, there is a third world precedent. Bangladesh has a programme to raise out of poverty many poor rural women who have no access to credit. Since 1976, that nation's Grameen Bank has made small, unsecured loans to almost 700,000 people in 14,000 villages. Unbelievably, it boasts a 98 per cent repayment rate.

The American Association for International Aging has come up with a plan for a Third Age Enterprise Development Bank that would apply the same principle on an international scale. It would finance new enterprises started by people over the age of 50.

Still another plan that is close to fruition is the establishment of a world fund for aging called The Banyan Foundation. Under the patronage of the United Nations, this fund would tap the private sector to help "empower the elderly to maintain maximum independence and their ability to contribute to society".

Third age enterprises break negative stereotypes of the elderly as pitiful and dependent, and replace them with the dynamic notion of older people as citizens with rights and duties, capable of contributing to the local economy and their own sustenance. They remind us that dependence is a two-way street. When we help the elderly, we also help ourselves.

*A speech that Ambassador Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, New York, made at the Eighth International Convention of FIAPA on dependence and the elderly, which was held at Montreal from 13 to 18 June 1990.

(Continued from page 6)

Directory of Services for Elderly People in the United Kingdom

The Directory of Services for Elderly People in the United Kingdom provides information on national and local, statutory and voluntary organizations that provide a range of services and opportunities for older people. Further information may be obtained from: Longman Group Ltd., Pinnacles, Fourth Avenue, Harlow, Essex CM19 5AA, United Kingdom.

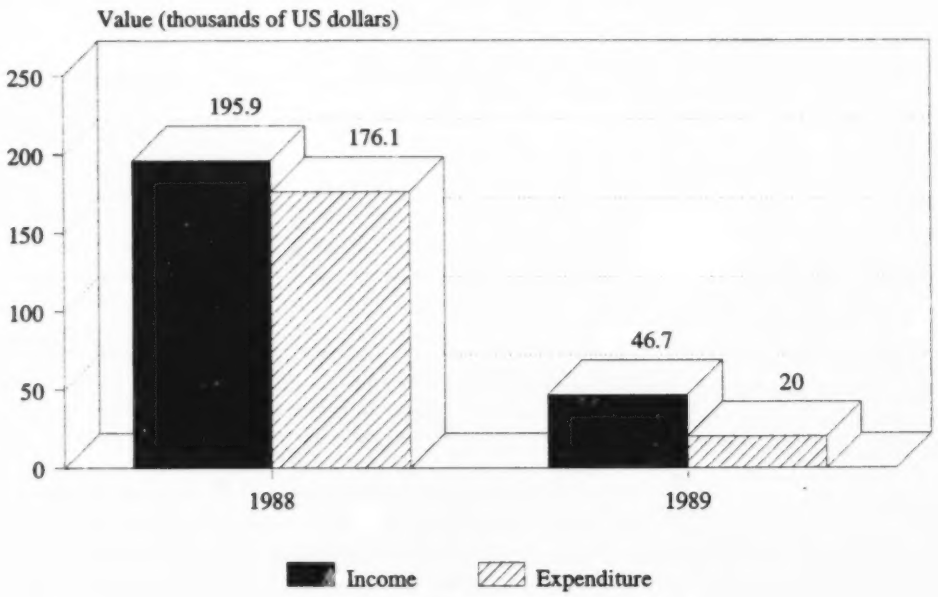
Training Family Caregivers

Training Family Caregivers: A Manual for Group Leaders presents a complete training programme for family members and is designed to respond to their needs by providing them with information and teaching them skills. The programme aims at reducing stress by helping relatives to learn new ways of meeting the complex needs of frail elders. Eight modules cover such issues as: maintaining hygiene; using medication wisely; lifting, moving and transfers; and managing confusion. Further information may be obtained from: Karl Pillemer, Family Research Laboratory, 126 Horton Social Science Center, University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire 03824, United States.

A taylor at work, Hardwar, India Photo by J. Jaquier, UNESCO

Trust Fund for Aging

Income and expenditure (grants)



Source: UNOV/CSDHA internal data.

V.90-88934 ISSN 0251-6802 Printed in Austria